TAKE COURAGE,
JOIN HANDS,
STAND BESIDE US!
A new bottom-up market oriented strategy to generate resources for maternal and newborn health

Indicators of maternal, newborn and reproductive health continue to show wide differences between developed and developing countries. Some 530,000 women and three million newborn babies in the first week of life die each year from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, and almost all of these potentially preventable deaths occur in developing country settings.

These indicators also suggest that the world is not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 (reduce child mortality and improve maternal health).

Hence, there is an urgent need to develop innovative strategies for attracting the resources required to address this global public health challenge and improve the health of women and their young children.
New trends in resource mobilization

The limits of aid-based strategies for stimulating development and health improvements in low resource settings have received considerable attention from numerous scholars in recent years (1,2). While such scholars point out the lack of results of donor driven development-assistance approaches, they are consistently optimistic about the potential of bottom-up market oriented initiatives for improving the lives of even the poorest populations (1,2,3). These critical perspectives on the development industry have surfaced at the same time as new social networking platforms including Facebook, Myspace, Youtube, Wikipedia and Twitter have begun shaping the way we live, interact, and learn (4,5,6). These platforms are horizontal and dynamic in structure, replacing traditional hierarchical management models as the most effective way of doing business and making an impact on social issues. Given the parallels between top-down management styles and traditional aid strategies,

it is time to consider the application of bottom-up market driven strategies to the improvement of maternal, newborn, and reproductive health.

The PMNCH (http://www.who.int/pmnch/en/) is a global health partnership launched in September 2005. The PMNCH joins the maternal newborn and child health communities into an alliance of almost 260 members from all over the world to ensure that all women, infants and children not only remain healthy but thrive. The PMNCH secretariat is hosted and administered by the World Health Organization in Geneva.
The PMNCH network will allow for rapid and extensive dissemination of messages aimed at engaging people in the new strategy. Because the speed by which messages spread through social networks is similar to how many viruses spread within human populations, the widespread diffusion of ideas through internet based social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube has been termed ‘viral marketing’. For a message to become ‘viral’ it should have an interesting content, be transmissible via engaging applications (e.g., video, picture, etc.) and compel the recipient to share it with friends and contacts (7,8). To meet these conditions, we have decided to expand the Art for Health Project (A4H) into the Women Create Life operation.
Background: A4H

A4H was launched in 2006 by HRP (the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction), as an innovative advocacy project with the aim of generating greater resources and interest in addressing the stark imbalance in maternal and newborn health conditions globally.

The goal of A4H is to use art to increase awareness about, and promote action towards improving reproductive health around the world, especially the health of women and children (9).

The art commissioned for A4H is designed as a call to action, encouraging the viewer to participate in a unified effort to improve the lives of women of the present and future generations.

The artwork also aims to change the stereotypical representation of underprivileged women as passive victims of circumstances with an image that shows them instead as willing and capable partners in the advancement of women’s health.
In 2006, the artist Ms Elisabetta Farina was commissioned to produce the first series of A4H paintings. Using a style originally developed during the Pop Art movement, she produced a set of paintings portraying positive images of women from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

HRP owns the paintings and makes them available for display at exhibitions, congresses and other meetings and events. They can also be used for campaigns (for printing on posters, calendars, cards, handbags, etc.), in workshops, discussion groups and fundraising events related to the promotion of women’s and children’s health. As an example, in June 2008, 38 paintings were sold at an auction in Rome organized by Christie’s and the NGO IMAGINE and attended by numerous politicians, celebrities, renowned journalists, diplomats, art collectors and gallery owners. The 34,400 euros raised are being used to fund the development and support of a mobile health clinic to improve the health and sanitary conditions of local communities in La Mosquitia, Honduras, with particular attention to pregnant women and young children. To date, 28 A4H exhibitions have been held in several countries (Brazil, Chile, France, India, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Namibia, South Africa, Switzerland, United Republic of Tanzania, the United Kingdom and USA). It is estimated that over 30,000 people have seen the paintings at these exhibitions.

The wide success of A4H confirms that contemporary art is an effective vehicle for reaching broad audiences on health issues.
Women Create Life aims to celebrate women worldwide through contemporary art as creators of life.

Women not only give birth to babies but often generate the conditions that promote life and development in their communities, thus contributing to global health.
Business model

The main objectives of the business model, unprecedented in the field of maternal and newborn health, are:

• To develop innovative methods to finance projects for international health activities
• To use social networks as a tool for engaging the general public, and as a platform for developing new marketing techniques (e.g., viral marketing).
• To extend advocacy activities beyond the public health community to the general public and political and cultural domains.

The business model of Women Create Life is based on three integrated components:

• Women create Life will be established as a NGO and will obtain an exclusive license from HRP to produce objects based on A4H artwork. The NGO will be led by a CEO who will supervise the work of several staff members. The CEO will be responsible to a board of directors.
• An advisory board will be set up as an independent body comprising leading experts from different backgrounds.
• Franchising agreements will be stipulated with the partners of the PMNCH to advertise and sell objects through their website/events.
• HRP and PMNCH will develop a communication/advertising strategy with the support of an international advertising agency (Ogilvy).

In the context of the business model we propose the following distribution of net profits of each sale:

• 20-30% to the partners securing the sale;
• 70-80% to project development, to enable continued production of the products and other advocacy activities.
The Marketing Mix

Four components of the classic marketing mix
The Women Create Life products will include:

- Items commissioned by the NGO. These items will be specifically designed to promote the main messages conveyed by Women Create Life, and to appeal to a mass audience.

- Items produced by companies that will develop their own lines of products associated with the Women Create Life logo and mission. This option will be regulated through commercial agreements with the Women Create Life NGO. All commercial agreements will have to be approved by the Board of Directors.

- Items produced by local craftspeople especially from low resource settings. Such items will not necessarily carry the Women Create Life logo but the producers will benefit from the Women Create Life distribution channels.

- High-end items such as paintings, fine prints and other works of art that will be certified for authenticity and exclusivity and made available to the public in limited quantities.
Several economists have recently highlighted the importance of adequate pricing policies for the success of health related market oriented initiatives in very low resource settings (2,3).

Thus, the pricing policies for Women Create Life will be subject to approval by the Board of Directors and will reflect the socio-economic realities of targeted markets.

Prices of craftworks, for example, will be set in order to provide a fair profit to the local craftspeople from low income settings. The prices of high-end items will be set by the Advisory Board that will include experts from the art world. The prices of the products produced by affiliated companies in commercial agreements with Women Create Life will be set by the companies and regulated by the commercial agreements. The prices of the Women Create Life products will range from items costing around 10-20US$ to upwards of US$200.
Our main proposed model of distribution is an adaptation of the model successfully implemented in the context of the MuseumsQuartier, a cultural site in central Vienna occupying a block of 53,000 squared meters and including several buildings, many of them originally part of the Imperial Stables (11). The MuseumQuartier is based on an innovative marketing strategy to promote the activities of several diverse cultural institutions grouped under the brand Quartier21. These institutions are independently managed and promoted. Quartier21 is responsible for the overall marketing strategy at national and international level and for management of MuseumsQuartier. This management structure allows “as much autonomy as possible and as much uniformity as necessary to ensure the successful operation of the complex as a whole” (11).

From this perspective, Women Create Life will function as the overarching brand and framework that will provide an enabling environment for several other entities (the PMNCH partners, affiliated companies, artists) to benefit from the aims of the project. The main difference from the Museum Quartier model is that the location of the operation will be virtual.

Importantly participating partners will have the flexibility to tailor the sale and promotion of Women Create Life products to their own activities and projects aimed at improving maternal and newborn health and reproductive health.

However, Women Create Life will retain the right to approve partner activities that will benefit from the proceeds of the sales of Women Create Life products.
The main planned outlets of distribution are:

- An interactive Women Create Life website with links to the websites of partners and participating institutions/individuals;

- Social network pages (e.g., Facebook and MySpace);

- Dedicated stores in main cities (Geneva, London, New York);

- Outlets provided by affiliated companies/institutions/individuals such as company stores and/or sales areas in department stores.
The promotion strategy will be developed by Ogilvy and will include specific actions and messages related to:

**Advertising**

**Institutional communication**

**Direct sales**

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**Benefits**

Successful social networks are those that are beneficial to all participants. Therefore, our aim is to create a social network through Women Create life that will provide significant benefits to all entities involved.

- Most importantly, through the business framework described above, women and their families around the world will benefit from the resources generated from the initiative.

- HRP and PMNCH will be provided with a great opportunity to fulfill important aspects of their missions by catalyzing the development and implementation of an innovative strategy that will increase visibility and needed resources for maternal, newborn, and reproductive health. In addition, they will be able to contribute to on-
going efforts to unify the maternal newborn and child health community and increase its status in the global health arena. Finally, Women Create Life will provide HRP and the PMNCH with the needed funds to help sustain and continuously expand the initiative.

- PMNCH partners can substantially benefit financially as no investment will be required from their part and they will gain a fixed percentage on any sales they achieve. They will have the autonomy to use the funds generated to finance specific activities aimed at improving maternal health and they will be accountable to their constituencies and customers for how funds are used.
- Commercial partners will be offered a valuable opportunity to market their products as contributing to sustainable development, thus effectively meeting the increasing demands on companies to express through concrete actions social corporate responsibility.

Roles

We predict that Women Create Life will develop as a dynamic network and that roles can expand according to the needs of the network. However, as a starting organizational structure, the following division of roles is proposed:

- The NGO Women Create Life will be responsible for designing, producing and marketing the objects, developing the website and other distribution strategies, and stipulating commercial agreements with affiliated companies.
- HRP will provide the license to the NGO Women Create Life for exclusive rights to use selected A4H paintings that HRP will commission specifically for the Women Create Life initiative. The PMNCH will provide access to its 290 highly motivated partners (screened/accepted through a formal process). In addition, HRP and the PMNCH will collaborate with Ogilvy to brand the initiative and develop a comprehensive communication and advertising strategy and campaign.
- The PMNCH partners will sell objects to members of their constituencies through different channels and prepare communication materials explaining which projects will be supported by any of the proceeds from sales of the products. The partners will be accountable to their constituencies for the use of funds generated (e.g., by preparing and disseminating progress reports, events, etc. on how the funds were used)

The way forward

Women Create Life is based on a unifying strategy inspired by some of the major cultural trends of our time: The increasing popularity of contemporary art, and the potential of contemporary art as a powerful medium for marketing and management strategies (12), the expanding influence of social networks (4,5), and increased interest in the application of bottom-up market oriented initiatives for development purposes (1,2,3). We envision Women Create Life as an opportunity to explore how these cultural trends can be harnessed to improve the health of women and families worldwide.
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